

Parks and open spaces provide opportunities for recreation, relaxation, informal sports, walking, or simply a break from the stresses of everyday life. They also serve as gathering places where community members can meet, informally or for planned activities. These activities need to be supported with an adequate supply of accessible and appropriately developed space. The city should have parks with a distribution and form that allows them to be enjoyed by workers during the day, used by children and the elderly close to their homes, and to serve as a point of focus for residential neighborhoods.

The General Plan builds on Lodi's existing parks and recreation facilities, ensuring that community members will continue to enjoy park and recreation services. This Element provides background on the city's existing parks, open space, and recreation facilities; describes planned improvements; and outlines policies and standards to ensure a continued high level of service as the city grows.



Emerson Park (top), Blake Park (middle), and Hale Park (bottom) provide recreation and open space facilities for local neighborhoods.

6.1 EXISTING PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

This section presents a summary of the existing conditions of Lodi's parks, recreational programs, recreational facilities, and open space areas. The Lodi Department of Parks and Recreation serves not just residents of the City of Lodi, but also non-residents living in the Lodi Unified School District service area north of eight Mile Road. Currently (2009), Lodi has 23 developed and four undeveloped parks and open spaces. Table 6-1 details the type and breakdown of park and basin acres for each of the existing parks and open spaces. As the table shows, basins play a large role in the provision of parks and open spaces, accounting for 34% of all parkland. Figure 6-1 illustrates the City's existing, planned, and proposed parks and open spaces.

A comprehensive Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan was adopted in 1994, providing a detailed study, plan, and implementation strategy for parks and open space in Lodi. The General Plan builds from the standards and park types defined in this plan.

Park Types

Mini/Urban Parks

Mini/Urban parks include tot lots, children's playgrounds, and other small single purpose play lots designed primarily for very young children. Due to their small size, facilities are usually limited to a small open grass area, a children's playground, and occasional picnic site. Mini/Urban parks are typically located in areas that are fully developed and vacant land is scarce. There is only one mini-park in Lodi.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks include playgrounds and parkland primarily designed for non-supervised and non-organized recreation, and as passive open space. In addition to grassy area, recreation facilities may include ball fields, basketball courts, dog areas, playgrounds, soccer fields, swimming pools, and meeting rooms. Ideally, neighbor-

hood parks serve a ½-mile radius area. Currently, there are 14 neighborhood parks in Lodi.

Community Parks

Community parks serve a larger segment of the population, and are primarily designed for active and structured recreation for both children and adults. While individual and family activities are encouraged, community parks are a main channel for organized activities and sports. In addition, all or a large portion of land in these parks also function as detention basin during rainy seasons. These parks have a service area of one to two-mile radius and range from 10 to 26 acres in size. There are currently two community parks in the city—Kofu and Salas—providing ball fields, basketball courts, dog areas, playgrounds, picnic areas, meeting rooms, skateboard park, in-line hockey and tennis court facilities.

Regional Parks

The Lodi Lake Park is the only regional park within Lodi's City limits. A regional park serves the entire region, attracting visitors far beyond the boundaries of the city. Typically exceeding 100 acres in size, regional parks feature a wide range of activities and facilities. The 43-acre Lodi Lake Park is characterized by the Mokelumne River, swimming, beaches, and large picnic areas. It is also attached to the Lodi Lake Wilderness Area. A proposed expansion of the park, planned on the Lodi Lake West Bank Area, will add approximately eight acres to the regional park (five additional acres have been designated for the surface water treatment facility).

Natural Open Space

The Lodi Lake Wilderness Area is the only natural open space within City limits. Natural open space is undeveloped land primarily left in its natural environment with recreation uses as a secondary objective. The Lodi Lake Wilderness Area spans 58 acres, including 25 acres of lake area. Located adjacent to Lodi Lake Park, this site was intended to preserve the riparian and natural open space along the Mokelumne River. This open space also provides 2.3 miles of paved and unpaved trails.



Lodi Lake Park and Wilderness Area serve a regional population and provide access to a natural open space.



Kofu Park is a community park with amenities that serve a larger area.

Special Use Areas

Special Use Areas are public recreation areas or land occupied by specialized facilities, including special landscaped areas, community gardens, single purpose sport uses, or sites occupied by recreation buildings such as a senior or community center. There are no defined service areas for this type of parks and open spaces. Currently, five City parks fall into this category: Armory Park/

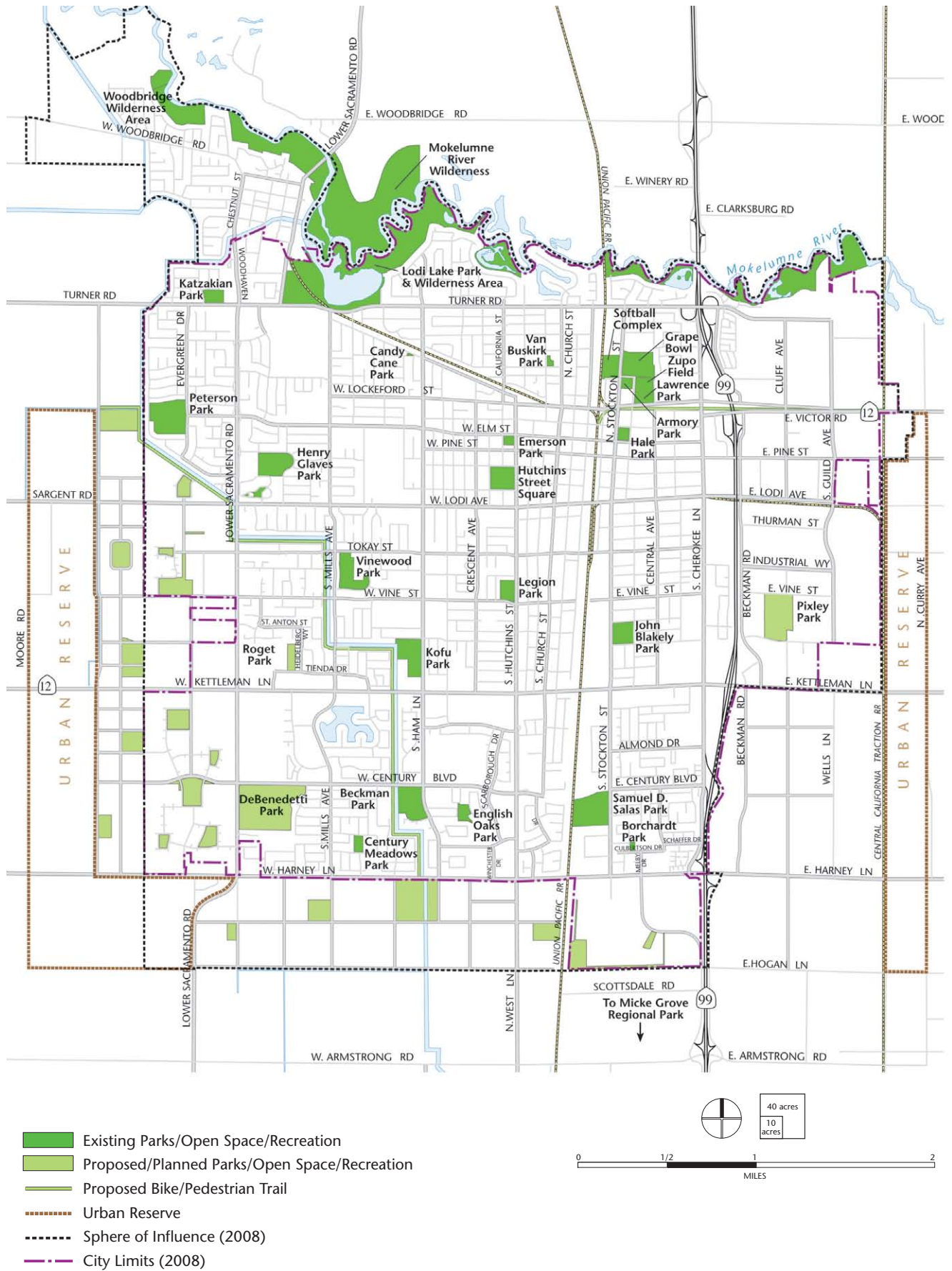
Chapman Field, the Grape Bowl, the Softball Complex, Zupo Field, as well as Hutchins Street Square, described below. These facilities are assets for Lodi residents, but also provide opportunities for regional attraction, such as for athletic tournaments.

TABLE 6-1: EXISTING PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND ACTIVITY FACILITIES

NAME	PARK TYPE	Acres		
		PARK	PARK/BASIN	TOTAL
Armory Park/Chapman Field	Special Use	3.2		3.2
Beckman Park	Neighborhood	0.8	15.8	16.6
Borchardt Park	Mini/Urban	0.8		0.8
Candy Cane Park	Mini/Urban	0.2		0.2
Century Meadows Park	Neighborhood	2.7		2.7
Emerson Park	Neighborhood	3.0		3.0
English Oaks Park	Neighborhood	3.7		3.7
Grape Bowl	Special Use	15.0		15.0
Hale Park	Neighborhood	3.1		3.1
Henry Graves Park	Neighborhood	2.8	11.3	14.0
Hutchins Street Square	Special Use	4.5		4.5
John Blakely Park	Neighborhood	10.0		10.0
Katzakian Park	Neighborhood	5.0		5.0
Kofu Park	Community	2.0	8.0	10.0
Lawrence Park	Neighborhood	2.8		2.8
Legion Park	Neighborhood	6.0		6.0
Lodi Lake Park	Regional	43.0		43.0
Lodi Lake Wilderness Area	Natural Open Space	58.0		58.0
Peterson Park	Neighborhood	2.2	19.8	22.0
Samuel D. Salas Park	Community	2.5	23.5	26.0
Softball Complex	Special Use	7.6		7.6
Van Buskirk Park	Neighborhood	1.0		1.0
Vinewood Park	Neighborhood	0.8	15.2	16.0
Zupo Field	Special Use	3.3		3.3
Total		183.9	93.6	277.5

Source: City of Lodi Department of Park and Recreation, 2009.

FIGURE 6-1: PARKS, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, AND OPEN SPACE





Hutchins Street Square is one of the cultural centers of Lodi, hosting theater performances and offering recreation classes.



Century Meadows Park.

TABLE 6-2: OTHER PARKS AND OPEN SPACES WITHIN THE PLANNING AREA

NAME	ACRES
Woodbridge Wilderness Area	17
Micke Grove Regional Park	258
Total	275

Source: City of Lodi, 2007; San Joaquin County, 2007.

Hutchins Street Square

This 12-acre facility is a cultural, recreational, business, and community center of Lodi. Originally built in 1919 as Lodi Union High School, the site was burned by arson in 1974, and has transformed over the years into the vibrant community center that is now Hutchins Street Square. It offers student enrichment and adult specialty art and cultural classes, a performance theater, a senior center, a swimming pool, and a conference center. Hutchins Street Square also leases its facilities for private events. The facility is administered by the City and has an advocacy/fundraising board, The Hutchins Street Square Foundation.

Other Parks, Recreation Facilities, and Open Spaces

While the City of Lodi is the main provider of parkland recreational facilities for the community, San Joaquin County also provides amenities in the Planning Area. Table 6-2 and Figure 6-1 illustrate these natural open space resources. In total, these sites add an additional 275 acres of parkland and open space within the planning area.

Woodbridge Wilderness Area

This regional park, operated by San Joaquin County, provides a ¼-mile of Mokelumne River frontage in the Town of Woodbridge. The natural area features a riparian environment where fishing enthusiasts catch trout, black bass and catfish.

Micke Grove Regional Park

This 258-acre regional oak tree park features the Micke Grove Zoo, a Japanese Garden, outdoor picnic shelters and indoor venues for receptions and events, Fun Town at Micke Grove Amusement Park, the San Joaquin Historical Museum, softball fields, and children's playgrounds. San Joaquin County operates the park, which lies just south of Armstrong Road, west of SR-99.

Park Distribution

Given the crucial role of open spaces in an urban environment, parks should have maximum accessibility. They should be located within a quick walk, bike ride, or drive from residents' homes. Lodi has a thorough network of parks, which are fairly well distributed around the city. A substantial area of southwest Lodi currently lacks open space, but two parks are proposed for the area, as shown on Figure 6-1.

Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programs

Lodi offers a wide range of recreational programs and facilities within its parks and open spaces, as shown in Table 6-3. Playgrounds, picnic areas, and restrooms are available in nearly all parks. Some notable recreation facilities in Lodi include in-line hockey at Peterson Park, a skateboard park at Kofu Park, the Softball Complex, the Grape Bowl stadium, and Zupo Hardball Field. In addition, many parks also provide sports fields that cofunction as detention basins during the rainy season.

The Lodi Parks and Recreation Department provides a remarkable variety of recreation programs and services to residents and non-residents. The Department offers both youth and adult sports, a kids' summer camp, swim lessons, and a host of other recreation programs. In coordination with Hutchins Street Square, the Lodi Public Library, and the Parks and Recreation Department, the City publishes a calendar of arts and recreation opportunities and offers convenient sign-up for activities.



Facilities at Katzakian Park, the Softball Complex, and the Grape Bowl host recreation programs and provide opportunities for tournaments and special events.

TABLE 6–3: EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE, BY RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES OFFERED

NAME	Restrooms	Play Area	Picnic Area	Ball Fields	Basketball	Soccer Field	Football Field	Tennis Court	Cricket	Swimming	Horseshoes	Skate Park	In-Line Hockey	Concession	Meeting Room	Dog Area	Trails
Armory Park / Chapman Field	•			•										•			
Beckman Park	•	•	•	•												•	
Borchardt Park																	
Candy Cane Park		•	•														
Century Meadows Park		•	•		•												
Century Park		•				•											
Emerson Park	•	•	•	•		•					•						
English Oaks Common		•	•														
Grape Bowl	•			•		•	•							•	•		
Hale Park	•	•	•		•										•		
Henry Graves Park	•	•	•	•		•											
Hutchins Street Square	•	•	•		•					•							
John Blakely Park	•	•	•	•	•				•	•	•						
Katzakian Park	•	•	•	•	•												
Kofu Park	•	•		•		•		•				•			•		
Lawrence Park	•	•	•													•	
Legion Park	•		•		•			•							•		
Lodi Lake Park		•	•							•	•					•	
Lodi Lake Wilderness Area																	
Peterson Park (Westgate)	•		•	•	•	•		•					•				
Samuel D. Salas Park	•	•	•	•		•								•			
Softball Complex	•		•	•										•	•		
Van Buskirk Park		•	•		•						•						
Vinewood Park	•			•		•			•							•	
Zupo Hardball Field	•			•										•			

Source: City of Lodi Department of Park and Recreation, 2009.

6.2 PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

The City of Lodi already has four undeveloped park and basin sites within City limits, totaling 88 acres. Approved developments could add over 72 acres of open space. The General Plan identifies an additional 210 acres of park, open space, and basin areas.

Planned Parks and Open Spaces

Table 6-4 details the City's undeveloped parks and open spaces, representing either city-owned properties with approved or proposed plans. Roget, DeBenedetti, and Pixley Parks have remained undeveloped since the 1994 Parks Master Plan due to financing challenges. These three parks have proposed plans, but are waiting for City Council's approval. The Lodi Lake West Bank Area will provide a total of eight acres of passive outdoor parkland and open space.

Approved Developments

The approved Southwest Gateway, Westside, and Reynolds Ranch developments will incorporate park, trail, and drainage basin requirements once the projects are complete. These requirements are outlined in Table 6-5.

New General Plan Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation Facilities

Distribution and Connectivity

New parks and open spaces have been distributed throughout the new growth areas to ensure convenient access for new and existing residents, as shown in Figure 6-1. Each mixed-use center designated on the Land Use Diagram in Figure 2-1 (see Chapter 2: Land Use) has a park located adjacent to it. In addition, each new school proposed in the new growth area contains an adjacent park. As result, students, residents, workers, and visitors have convenient access to City park, from school, residences, work, or while out shopping at a nearby store. Moreover, this co-location encourages use at different times of day. All new parks face the street and are situated on new streets, ensuring that parks are inviting

TABLE 6-4: PLANNED PARKS AND DRAINAGE BASINS

PARKS	TYPE	Acreage		
		PARK	PARK/ BASIN	TOTAL
DeBenedetti Park	Community	24.3	24.7	49.0
Lodi Lake West Bank Area	Natural Open Space	8.0		8.0
Pixley Park	Neighborhood	5.0	22.0	27.0
Roget Park	Community	4.3		4.3
Total		41.6	46.7	88.3

Source: City of Lodi Department of Parks and Recreation, 2009.

TABLE 6-5: REQUIRED PARKS AND DRAINAGE BASIN FOR APPROVED DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT NAME	TYPE (#)	Acreage		
		PARK/ OPEN SPACE	PARK/ BASIN	TOTAL
Reynolds Ranch Project	Neighborhood	4.0		4.0
	Ped/Bike Trail Buffer	8.0		8.0
	Basin		9.0	9.0
Southwest Gateway Project	Neighborhood (3)	3.9	17.4	21.0
	Mini (2)	4.2		4.2
	Ped/Bike Trail	5.1		5.1
Westside Project	Neighborhood (2)	4.4	10.3	14.7
	Mini (2)	3.7		3.7
	Ped/Bike Trail	2.3		2.3
Total		35.6	36.7	72.3

Source: City of Lodi Department of Park and Recreation, 2009.



Pixley Park, currently under construction, will create parkland east of SR-99.



The Woodbridge Irrigation Canal could be used as a trail for recreation.

for residents in the neighborhood, but also in the greater community. Parks that abut the street edge provide visual and actual accessibility and ensure safety of users because of these “eyes on the street.”

Two multi-use trails are proposed, along the Woodbridge Irrigation District canal right-of-way, and along Victor Road/Lockford Street railroad right-of-way, from the city’s eastern boundary to downtown. These trails would provide paths for walking, jogging, and biking. Mid-sized neighborhood parks (8-15 acres each) are distributed in the new growth areas in the western and southern portion of the city. Two large parks (each roughly 23 acres), which could contain more expanded recreation facilities and ball fields, are located at each end of the proposed trail, providing a key connection for these amenities.

In sum, the General Plan designates 210 acres of parks and open space to meet the needs of existing and future community members, as shown in Table 6-6. Approximately 40 percent of the new open spaces are proposed to serve as drainage basins only. To maintain the level of service residents and visitors have come to enjoy and expect, the City and private developers must continue to provide new park facilities and drainage basins. Note that while new open space areas are not mapped in the Urban Reserve Area—just as other individual land uses like schools are not shown—these will be required as part of new development in these locations. Calculations assume that 12 percent of the Urban Reserve area will be developed as parkland to meet the needs of new users in this area.

TABLE 6–6: GENERAL PLAN PARK ACREAGE AND RATIOS

		ACRES		ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	
		Parks Only	Parks and Drainage Basins	Parks Only	Parks and Drainage Basins
Existing + Planned	63,362	226	366	3.6	5.8
Approved Developments	9,700	36	72	3.7	7.5
Proposed General Plan	26,400	136	210	5.2	8.0
Total	99,500	397	648	4.0	6.5
Total may not sum exactly due to rounding.					

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2009; Department of Finance, 2008.

Joint-Use Parks and Facilities

The City of Lodi and the Lodi Unified School District approved a joint-use agreement in 2000; this agreement outlines procedures for sharing facilities, including the parks that the District operates on its school sites. By coordinating use—particularly on weekends and during the summer when school is not in session—community members can enjoy access to more parks, and the City and School District are able to reduce their individual costs. Moreover, joint-use of open spaces that are in the older areas of the city, such as those around downtown and in the eastern neighborhoods, increase park space for existing residents in these more established neighborhoods.

Standards

The General Plan defines an overall park and open space standard of eight acres per 1,000 residents. At least four acres of this open space should be designated for parks only (that is, excluding drainage basins). This standard ensures a high level of park facilities and services for new residents and enhances the park supply and ratio

for existing users. In addition, the City’s Parks and Recreation Plan, prepared in 1994, defines more detailed standards, by the type of park.

In 2008, the City provided 366 acres of parkland to its 63,362 residents (including planned open spaces)—a ratio of 5.8 acres per 1,000 residents. Excluding basins reduces these numbers to 226 acres and a ratio of 3.6 per 1,000 residents. Parks and open spaces that result from approved development projects and the General Plan improve these ratios substantially. The General Plan provides an additional 210 acres of parkland for the anticipated population of 26,400 residents, representing a ratio of 5.2 acres of parks and 8.0 acres of parks and drainage basins per 1,000 persons, thereby sustaining the General Plan standard.

Accounting for existing, planned, and General Plan designated open spaces, Lodi’s projected 99,500 residents could expect a total of 648 acres of open space under the General Plan. This would provide 6.5 acres per 1,000 residents (or a ratio of 4.0, excluding drainage basins), slightly higher than the ratio currently provided.

GENERAL PLAN STANDARDS

- Eight acres of parks and drainage basins per 1,000 new residents, with four acres serving as parkland only.
- A park within a quarter-mile of each residence.

TYPE	SERVICE AREA	SIZE (ACRES)	ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS
Mini-Parks/Tot Lots	¼ mile radius	<3	none
Neighborhood	½ mile radius	5 – 15	2.5
Community	½ mile radius	20 – 30	1.8
Regional	Community or Region	50+	0.8
Natural Open Space	Community or Region	Varies	2.1
Special Use Areas	Community or Region	Varies	0.8
Total			8.0

Source: City of Lodi Park and Recreation Plan, 1994.

Financing

To assist in the acquisition and development of City parks, the City requires dedication of parkland or payment of in-lieu fees on all new residential, commercial, office, and industrial development. The fee is reviewed periodically and revised as necessary. Despite these fees, the City has had difficulty raising enough capital to acquire and develop new parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities. Several recent residential development projects, including Reynolds Ranch, Southwest Gateway, and Westside, have elected to build open space and recreation facilities on site, in sizes consistent with the City requirements. Including parkland in the site development process allows the City to work with developers to ensure that parks are accessible and appropriate for both new and existing community members.

One of the challenges to financing and providing adequate park land is that the City is the parks and recreation provider for the entire north County area (the Lodi Unified School District service area, north of Eight Mile Road).



6.3 POLICIES

For stormwater management policies, see Chapter 8: Safety.

GUIDING POLICIES

- P-G1** Provide and maintain park and recreation facilities for the entire community.
- P-G2** Protect natural resource areas, native vegetation, scenic areas, open space areas, and parks from encroachment or destruction.
- P-G3** Improve connectivity between parks and recreation facilities.
- P-G4** Expand non-vehicular paths and trails and bikeways.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES

- P-P1** Acquire and develop additional neighborhood and community parks to serve existing and future needs.
- P-P2** Provide open space to meet recreation and storm drainage needs, at a ratio of eight acres of open space per 1,000 new residents. At least four acres must be constructed for park and recreation uses only. Drainage basins should be constructed as distinct facilities, as opposed to dual-functioning park and drainage basin facilities.
- P-P3** Pursue the development of park and recreation facilities within a quarter-mile walking distance of all residences.
- P-P4** Ensure that parks are visible and accessible from the street, welcoming the surrounding neighborhood and citywide users.
- P-P5** Update the City's Open Space and Recreation Master Plan, as necessary to:
 - Arrange a distribution of open spaces across all neighborhoods in the city;
 - Ensure that parks are visible and accessible from the street, to the surrounding neighborhood, and citywide users; and

- Provide a variety of open spaces and facilities to serve the needs of the community, ensuring a balance between indoor and outdoor organized sports and other recreation needs, including passive and leisure activities.

- P-P6** Continue working with the Lodi Unified School District to share use of school and City park and recreation facilities through a mutually beneficial joint use agreement.
- P-P7** Work with developers of proposed development projects to provide parks and trails, as well as linkages to existing parks and trails.
- P-P8** Coordinate with the Woodbridge Irrigation District to develop a recreation trail for walking, jogging, and biking along the canal right-of-way, as shown in Figure 6-1.
- P-P9** Support improvements along the Mokelumne River in consultation and cooperation with the County and with creek restoration and design professionals.
- P-P10** Improve accessibility to the Mokelumne River and Lodi Lake Wilderness Area with walking and biking trails. Site park use and new facilities and trails in Lodi Lake Park such that they will not degrade or destroy riparian or sensitive habitat areas.
- P-P11** Encourage the planting of native trees, shrubs, and grasslands in order to preserve the visual integrity of the landscape, provide habitat conditions suitable for native vegetation, and ensure the maximum number and variety of well-adapted plants are maintained.
- P-P12** Encourage retention of mature trees and woodlands to the maximum extent possible. The City shall regulate the removal of trees that are defined as "heritage trees."
- P-P13** Identify and discourage the removal of significant trees on private and public property by establishing a tree inventory and tree management ordinance. Where removal is required, the City shall require a two-for-one replacement or transplantation.

- P-P14** Review infrastructure needs for existing and new recreational facilities, and where appropriate, identify required improvements in the City's Capital Improvement Program.
- P-P15** Renovate the Grape Bowl in order to increase use and revenue generation.
- P-P16** Ensure safety of users and security of facilities through lighting, signage, fencing, and landscaping, as appropriate and feasible.
- P-P17** Continue to provide parks and recreation services to all residents within the Lodi Unified School District service area north of Eight Mile Road. Expand visitor and non-resident fee-based programs to ensure that non-residents pay their share of park maintenance and improvement costs.
- P-P18** Promote the use of the City's existing and planned Special Use park and recreation facilities for both local resident use and for visitor attractions, such as athletic tournaments.
- P-P19** Require master planned residential communities to dedicate parkland consistent with General Plan standards. In-lieu fees will only be acceptable where an exemption from providing a neighborhood park facility would not adversely affect local residents because an existing park is nearby.
- P-P20** Address park dedication and new development impact fees as part of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Update, to ensure compliance with the General Plan park and open space standard.
- P-P21** Seek out new and protected funding sources in order to maintain and expand park inventory.